or Rome, and any concomitant figures or foliage, are more graceful than the expression of the general mass or outline, which is beautiful, and, in northern architecture, are more grotesque than the general character, which is picturesque. J. B. W.

ORIGINALITY IN ARCHITECTURE.

I FEEL a strong inclination to send you a sort of exposition of the principles on which I have made an endeavour after original architecture in the design, bearing my name, in the Architectural Exhibition,—the "Design for a Contemplated Public Building." Perhaps I run a risk in thus taking myself for my text; but, as I have assumed somewhat of the position of a reformer, and have been met with the reasonable maxim, that the faultfinder ought to supplement his theory with practical improvement, I am glad to have an opportunity of making an endeavour, and I hope I need not allow false delicacy to prevent me from explaining to my fellow-workers what my endeavour is.

I have only one prefatory remark to make:—it is not fair to call upon the theoretical reformer for practical proof till *the opportunity* is afforded him. If young minds now-a-days denounce non-originality, it is not therefore reasonable to demand of themselves at once all things new: it is something, and a great thing, to have conceived the idea,—to have attained the theoretical and abstract fact, however bare and yet unfruitful it may be; and a generation, perhaps, may pass before the theorizer in his maturity of thought and opportunity produces the proof, or even another and another generation before the difficult task is accomplished by his children. Therefore, he does his best for reform who avails himself of the opportunity,—uses his most careful endeavour to accomplish perhaps a small beginning, and hesitates not to explain how he has attempted it. In my present endeavour I do not know that I have succeeded: the fancied success of to-day is often too plainly seen to be a failure to-morrow; but certainly your own kind notice last week, in passing, seems an evidence that, whether I have or have not accomplished all I have aimed at, I have, at least, accomplished something from which a lesson may be drawn.

My purpose, then, is primarily to form a building of chaste and majestic front; in two stories,—the lower for the apartments of every-day use, and the upper for the public or show apartments.

It occurs to me that what is called "an order," or properly a colonnade, may serve my purpose well as the principle of the chief story. I will not, of course, form a colonnade to embrace both stories; but the lower must be a basement. I desire a simple and plain character. Let me have, therefore, a simple and plain column. I will try a square column. All the "orders" in dogmatic use are round. But I do not see why this should be so: on the contrary, I am inclined to think a square *stone* column is, perhaps, more correct æsthetically. A square column, moreover, will be a good fundamental idea for simplicity; and in the squareness of the column, also, I fancy I can see a principle for mouldings and details generally. In the mouldings I see no need for more than the fillet and the cavetto: such features as balusters and cornice modillions may be plain rectangular blocks, and the base plain gradations.

A principle which I take for granted is, that the vertical structure must connect itself with the horizontal ground by a spreading stylobate, and that the vertical line must be turned outwards again by a counter-balancing cornice. (The rationale of this I think I argued at length in your pages some four years ago.) From this I deduce cap and base, stylobate and cornice, and so on as the case may be. A heavy stylobate, by the bye, is a noble feature.

I must have doors and windows,—or rather entrances and light. I *must* keep up the integrity of my colonnade; and this may be a difficulty. No: I will merely make my wall work a screen between the columns, admitting light over it. And for honest design I ought to keep up the colonnade in the interior, which in these days of plate-glass may be easily done as I have shown,—each window being formed of a single plate to show the colonnade in its pure principle. The doors are no difficulty, and the window opening is above as usual.

Whether to make the roof appear or not is an important question. After trying the roof in many forms without success, I try the parapet; and this, if an open balustrade, is not, I think, incorrect in principle, although there is, perhaps, something in it scarcely so satisfactory in theory as if the roof were made part of the design. Moreover, it will be found, I think, that a parapet has a greater effect where dignity of façade is the object. The pediment suggests itself,—but this does not serve my purpose, even if I were more satisfied than I am of the correctness of its principle. I choose the parapet, therefore, although under a sort of protest.

To keep the basement free of windows condnces to the majesty of effect; and as I can manage it conveniently, I place windows in the end and back façades alone.

The aim of the whole design is severe simplicity, with no more magnificence than may be proposed for execution.

If you should still pass upon my work even a partially favourable verdict, the careful thought which it has cost me will be amply repaid; and if, on the other hand, my attempt should be considered to be rather a failure, it will at any rate serve to illustrate what it is that I have meant when I spoke of the process of original design. ROBERT KERR.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE cast-iron roof of the Bricklayers' Arms Station of the South-Eastern line gave way on Wednesday afternoon, and the whole, extending 400 feet in length, and in two spans of 80 feet each in breadth, came down with a crash like a discharge of artillery, the whole range of buildings being at once reduced to a mass of ruins, the front wall only with the tower left standing, but in so dangerous a condition as to be every moment expected also to fall. At the time there were a large number of carriages under the sheds, and also men at work: labourers were at once employed to search, and shortly after succeeded in rescuing several porters, frightfully injured, and one quite dead. Various causes are assigned for this sad affair, but that most credited is, that while some of the workmen were engaged in turning carriages on a table, a buffer struck one of the upright pillars of the station, which so shook the whole fabric as to cause its fall. This station, it may be remembered, was erected in 1844 on the site of one, a portion of the roof of which had previously fallen, with loss of life also. A great number of men have since Wednesday been actively engaged in searching the ruins for the purpose of ascertaining whether any other parties are buried beneath the immense mass of iron and stone work. The northern line of roofing stands entire; but, from the fact of the other two forming its main support, the men were obliged to place poles against it, to prevent it also from toppling over. At the time of the disaster there were from 150 to 200 workmen there, but it is believed no passengers or strangers.* ——The recent opening of the Great Northern to Peterborough has turned public attention to the remainder of the line as yet unfinished. That part of the main trunk to the north of Retford being mostly completed, the company have now commenced operations between Retford and Peterborough, and Messrs. Oldham and Sons have contracted for that portion of the line between the former town and Newark. These gentlemen having obtained possession of certain tracts of land in the neighbourhood of Tuxford and Markham, where the heaviest portions of the works lie, have set on a number of hands at Tuxford. An understanding as to fares and tolls, it is said, has been come to with the London and North-Western.——The opening of the bridge over the Tweed, at Berwick, on the York, Newcastle, and Berwick line, by her Majesty and the Prince, has been fixed for the 29th inst., when also the central station at Newcastle will be opened, for the reception of the royal passengers.——The last lift of the last tube of the Britannia Bridge was completed amid much acclamation on Friday in last week, and everything is said to progress so satisfactorily that the entire structure will be opened a fortnight earlier than was expected.——The engine drivers and firemen of the Eastern Counties have struck. They complain of unjust fines and capricious discharges for the purpose of getting rid of them for less experienced but cheaper men. New hands have been appointed in their place, and the old have been looking closely into their characters and accomplishments. Meantime the directors have suspended or discontinued the running of no less than eight daily trains, including "all trains on the Maldon and Braintree branches." The old hands declare that they will not return under the present superintendence, and they have submitted propositions which the directors have refused to comply with. The latter have, however, remitted fines complained of, and paid the wages of those suspended for alleged faults. The drivers and firemen, since their resignation, have had various meetings and deliberations on the subject of their grievances, and the directors, on the other hand, have issued their version of the case, in the form of communications in the daily press. It is not easy, at present, to form any clear opinion on the subject.——On the subject of railway comforts at home and abroad, Mr. Dickens, in his *Household Words*, has the following, among other remarks:—"On the French railroads setting aside the question that the fares are much lower, the second class carriages are comfortably cushioned, having pretty stout blinds to keep out the sun; windows that really are capable of being pulled up and down, besides hooks for hats—a great convenience on a journey. In winter, in an English first class carriage, there is no protection against frost and damp; but in nearly all the foreign railways, no sooner does the winter set in than the first-class traveller finds the bottom of his carriage provided with a long tin case full of hot water. Comfort in railway travelling, is, however, brought to the highest perfection in Germany. An esteemed correspondent at Vienna writes to us on this subject in the following terms:—On the '*Wiener Neustädter Eisenbahn* Vienna and Neustadt Railway, the carriages of the first, second, and third class may each be said to resemble a spacious room, furnished with seats, something like a concert-room, and having a broad passage down the middle. Attached to each carriage, and going *the whole length of the train, is a broad wooden plank, along which the guards are constantly walking, so that the slightest thing amiss could scarcely occur without their perceiving it immediately.* Just before the arrival of the train at any station, one of these functionaries quietly opens the door, and, instead of calling out, walks without any hurry or bustle down the division from one end to the other, repeating, in a clear and ordinary tone of voice, the name of the station approached, and requiring the tickets of such as are to alight there. With such an arrangement—giving ample time for the gathering together of coats, canes, umbrellas, reticules, and so forth—even Martha Straggles herself might have got through a journey unscathed and 'undisturbed.'"——The railway calls for the month of August, so far as they can be at present ascertained, amount to 195,930*l.* against 1,184,527*l.* at the same date last year. The proportion called by foreign companies is 22,211*l.* In August, last year, there were no calls by foreign companies.——On Friday week a locomotive engine, only 10 tons in weight, passed at 25, arrived at Waverley-bridge from Glasgow, with a train of six carriages. The engine is said to be on the principle of Adams's patent, designed for short distances, and is only to be attached to a single carriage, capable, however, of carrying about 100 passengers. The experimental trip was understood to have been quite successful.——Lord Brougham, in the House of Lords, has affirmed a decision of the Lords Commissioners finding provisional committees not liable, by mere consent to have their names on the list of provisional committees, to be called on to contribute to expenses afterwards incurred.

* When time and inquiry shall have elicited, if possible, some further insight into the mysterious cause of so much mischief, we shall, of course, recur to this very serious and most startling event; that a most searching investigation *at once* must be made is but too obvious, and that we will narrowly watch the progress and result of that investigation we need hardly state: meantime all that we or any one can do, under present circumstances, is to report the facts together with the rumours current at the time of going to press.

To learn about OCR and PDF Compression visit our website